

PROPOSALS

*For the better Management of the Affairs of
the POOR.*

ALthough many good Laws have formerly been made for Reliet and Imployment of the Poor of this Kingdom, and of late several very Honourable Effayes by Proposals for supplying the Defects of such Laws (as those of Sir *Josiah Child*, Mr. *Firmin* and others;) yet we find so little Remedy of the Evils thereby intended to be prevented, that many Hundreds of Peggars and Necessitous People go, lye, and are carryed about the Streets of this City and Suburbs, forced, as they say, to prevent their Starving: This being a very great dishonour to the Christian Profession in General, and our Nation in Particular: Yet a great many Well-minded People are with Bowels of Compassion forced daily to be Eye-Witnesses of, whose Concern for those Miserable Objects is Augmented, when they consider the Vast Sums of Money, that, by the Charity of our Predecessours, Standing Rates, Customary Collections, &c. are appropriated to their Use.

The many Imbezlements and Misapplications of this Stock being, as we apprehend, the Principal Cause of all the Miseries these Poor Wretches sustain; having good reason to believe that the present Income to the Use of the Poor is sufficient for their Maintenance, if under a better Management; especially, when disburden'd of that great Number of Seamens Wives, Children, and Relations, whose Necessities for want of their timely pay, though in His Majesties Service, forces them to apply themselves for Relief, and necessitates the Parishes to contribute to their wants to prevent their perishing: For the prevention of all which Evils for the future, and obtaining the good which will Naturally follow a better Regulation; These following are humbly offer'd to your Serious Considerations.

A

That

That for the Future each Seamans Wife, or Person by him Impowred, shall receive every Third Moneth to him growing due to be paid at his Majesties Pay Office in *London*.

That all former Incorporated Bodies, intrusted with Power and Management of the Affairs of the Poor, be dissolv'd.

That all Beggars, on what pretence soever be prohibited.

That all Feasting upon Parish-Stocks be prohibited, and each Man obliged to bear the Charge of his Office in relation to the Poor, and pay as others.

That the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, Burrough of *Southwark*, and all other Places within the Bills of Mortality be Associated into one Province or Body.

That there be one Assembly of Men Incorporated with perpetual Succession, by the Names of Fathers of the Poor; their Number to equalize the Parishes; to be Chosen once in Three Years at least by the Majority of each Parish, out of the most Honourable, either of the City or Countrey, within Ten Miles of the Community.

That this great Body have power to make such By-Laws, Ordinances and Orders as they shall think fit, for the good Governing, Implying, and Maintaining the Poor; and Copies of all such Laws by them made, presented to the Honourable House of Commons; Each first succeeding Sessions by them to be Confirmed; or as likewise Annually for ever to deliver a Copy to the said Honourable House of the Preceeding-Years Proceedings.

That the said Corporation shall, and may, without Licence in *Mortmain* Purchase or Receive any Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, not exceeding the Yearly Value of the Gift, Alienation, or Device of any Person or Persons who shall be enabled to give the same, and any Goods, Chattels, or Sums of Money whatsoever to the use of the Poor.

That Four in each Parish, out of such as have served all other Parish-Offices, be Yearly Chosen Overseers of the Poor.

That to Enable the Overseers the better to Discharge their Trust, and undergoe the Trouble, there be added to them a double Number, by the Name of Supervisors; Two of which to be the Church-Wardens for the time being, the other to be Chosen out of such as have served all Ward and Parish-Offices, or Men of known Estate and Honesty: The Choice to be by the Majority of Parishioners paying to the Poor; and for preventing all Mistakes, Misunderstandings, or Clandestine Impositions in such Choyce, the Clark of each Parish be obliged to make a Publick Declaration of Summons to the Parishioners the *Sunday* Preceeding the Choice; which shall be made the Succeeding Thursday, by the Majority then appearing.

That



That the Overseers and Supervisors do meet in the Vestry of the Respective Parish Churches every *Sabbath-day* in the Evening, immediately after Service or Sermon, to hear the Applications, and settle the Affairs of the Poor; but in case above Five of the Twelve be Absent, all Business to be adjourn'd until the Major part shall meet.

That A List be taken of all Gifts and other Incomes to the Use of the Poor; as likewise of all Pensioners and their Pensions; a Copy of which Yearly to be affixed in such place of each Church, as the Body of Twelve shall appoint.

That each Overseer with Two Supervisors take their Turns Weekly to visit the Poor, and take Care of all Accidental, as Foundlings, &c. as likewise of all such who in that Week shall have applyed themselves for Pensions, or other Assistance; and make the Report thereof to the Body the next Lords Day.

That each Overseer Receive from the Body a List of all Pensioners, and their Pensions under his Charge for the Succeeding Week.

That all Moneys as they grow due, either by Rents, Rates, Bells, Palls, Graves, Accidental Gifts, &c. shall be received by the Overseer that Week; he to be accountable to the Body the next *Sabbath-day*.

That for each Parish a Chest be made with Three different Locks, the Keys to be intrusted in the hands of Three of the Eldest of the Body of Twelve; in which Chest shall be kept in a Book fairly written, the Account of each Preceeding Week sign'd by all the Members present at the passing thereof; as likewise all Moneys that shall be in Stock and Writing, as belong to the Parish in right of the Poor. This Chest not to be opened but in Presence of Two at least of the Intrusted Members.

That this Body have Power to Demand of any Person or Persons, the Inspections of all Papers or Writings whatsoever, in order to the Discovery of any Clandestine Mortgages, Sales, or other Illegal Conveyances or Settlements: As likewise to Sue for, and prosecute the Rights of each Parish in any Courts of Law or Equity; Free of any Fees whatsoever, the Prosecution being in Right of True Paupers.

That for the more Regular Management and Settling the Succession of this Society Yearly, with the Four Overseers and Two Church-Wardens, Three of the Supervisors go off. Their Vacancies to be supplied, as in the Ninth Article.

That for the timely prevention of those Mischiefs which will attend any Mistakes that this Body may, its possible, commit; they shall be oblig'd within Fourteen dayes after each Quarter-Day, to carry in to the Fathers at such place as by them shall be appointed, their Originals, Weekly Books; and Yearly present a Copy of the List, as in the Eleventh Article.

That

That each Member of either the Great or Lesser Bodies, be obliged to Act in his Station upon the Penalty of As likewise each Parish to choose their Member or Representative within the time limited, upon the Penalty of

That in all Future Rates or Assessments to be made for the Poor, every Man qualify'd may have his Voice by his Representative; Twelve Men be Yearly Chosen in the Method, (as in the Ninth Article) and added to the Body of Twelve; which Twenty Four shall have Power to Compleat and Impose all Rates, and all Persons aggrieved to appeal to the Fathers.

How Honourable will the Memory of that Sessions be, to this and Future Ages, who are Founders of such, or like Constitutions; when as the Effects of them, they see such Bodies of Worthy Men discharging their Paternal Duty to Widows, Orphans, Strangers, and Necessitous People.

Such Regular Buildings in each Quarter of the Society, that one may contain Six or Seven Hundred People, with such Governours, Matrons and Inferiour Officers, whose Exemplary Lives, in all Modesty and Honesty, may be of great Service to those Poor, Ruff, and Unpolish'd People.

Those that before were almost Eaten up with Filth and Vermin, Cloathed with Nautious Rags and Dirt; now of Cleanly and Wholefome Countenance, in Modest Cloath, Tight and Whole in Shoes, Stockings, and Linnen.

Those that before did Eat, and were Lodg'd more like Brutes than Mankind; now Twice *per* Day, Sitting, Eating, and Drinking Good and Wholefome Provisions, and in Order: And that which is most Praiseworthy, Taught sensibly to crave a Blessing from the Lord upon, and Return Thanks for his Daily Provisions: And for their Reception at Night, Good and Cleanly Lodgings prepared.

Those that whil'st unhiv'd were a Swarm of Droans and Pest to the Society, become (oh a Miracle) Industrious Bees, each contributing something to the support of the General; such a Number in the Service of the Kitchen, such in the Laundry, such in the Wardrobe, such in the Nursery, such in the Looking after, and Attending Aged, Bed-Ridden, and Helpless People, such to the School, such to Instruſting those thereunto appointed by the Superiours in the use of the Hatchel and Wheel. And such as Instruſted at Work on the Stocks of Flax brought into the House to be Manur'd by the good House-Wives of the Neighbourhood. Much more of the same Nature might be added, but for brevity sake omitted.



